

WORKFORCE HORIZONS

Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Louisiana Department of Civil Service

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MEASURING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Research by the Gallup Organization (the people who do the Gallup Poll) has shown a strong connection between an employee's level of engagement and the level and quality of his or her work performance. However, the research also reveals that most workers are not engaged or may even be actively disengaged. What can an organization do to turn this situation around? Gallup Consulting has conducted extensive research and developed 12 questions (Q¹²) that measure employee engagement. Answers to the questions correlate with retention, productivity, customer engagement and safety.

These are the questions:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission / purpose of my company make me feel like my work is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?
12. In the last year, have I had opportunities to learn and grow?

The questions identify factors managers and organizations can influence. The Q¹² tool¹ has been used in various corporations by 87,000 divisions or work units and one and half million employees have participated.

Companies with higher Q¹² scores have experienced lower turnover, better productivity and better customer loyalty.

Source: The Gallup Management Journal;
<http://gmj.gallup.com>

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WORKFORCE PLANNING MAXIM OF THE DAY

“The key to being a good manager is keeping the people who hate me away from those who are still undecided.” – *Casey Stengel*

WHAT SUPERVISORS CAN DO TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES

Here are some tips from the state of South Carolina² on what successful supervisors do to retain employees.

- Take time to get to know your employees and learn what makes them tick.
- Teach employees what you know
- Remain positive and calm under stressful situations
- Develop win-win relationships with others
- Set reasonable expectations that are within your authority
- Be consistent in approach and attitude from day-to-day and person-to-person
- Establish and maintain high standards of performance for yourself and those you supervise.
- Give timely and accurate feedback to employees on their performance; recognize their accomplishments.
- Set an example of behaving the way you ask others to behave

- Delegate effectively
- Build cooperation and teamwork
- Be flexible and adaptable to changing situations

²Adapted from “Retaining and Developing Human Resources,” South Carolina Office of Human Resources, State Budget and Control Board

THE KNOWING – DOING GAP

Every year organizations spend over sixty billion dollars on training, particularly management training. Although it is often presented as something innovative or groundbreaking, much of it is based on principles that are fundamental and timeless. Often “new” ideas in today’s journals can be found packaged in a slightly different way in books or journals printed decades earlier. There is a sea of management educational material out there, yet training in the same principles continues to be repeated year after year. Why? Because, although many organizations know what they should be doing, this knowledge is never actually implemented. So the training, including repackaging the same ideas, continues in the hope that some day the knowledge will be translated into action.

This gap between what organizations know they should do and what they actually do is the subject of a book, The Knowing – Doing Gap by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton, published by the Harvard Business School Press. In it, the authors discuss what the barriers are to translating knowledge into action and how successful organizations have overcome them. Some of the guidelines they offer are

1. It is just as important for employees to understand why they are doing

- what they do (the organization's philosophy) as knowing how to do it.
2. Action is more important than elegant plans and concepts. Avoid having talk substitute for action or rewarding only the good talkers.
 3. No learning occurs without doing; the best learning occurs by doing and teaching others.
 4. Mistakes and failure are an expected part of learning and of being innovative. Employees should be taught to learn from their mistakes but not fear being punished for them.
 5. Drive out fear. Create an environment where employees feel valued and that it is safe to take a risk or try something new.
 6. Discourage shooting down proposals by citing reasons they cannot be done; instead discuss obstacles by framing positive plans to overcome them
 7. Do not create internal reward systems that encourage harmful competition of employees within the organization against each other. Reward cooperation within the organization toward organizational goals.
 8. When developing workforce measures, pick a few key and simple measures that are the most critical. Complex systems attempting to measure everything often end up being counter to the organizations real goals

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The greatest deception men suffer is from their own opinions." *Leonardo da Vinci*

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Purpose: The purpose of the Workforce Horizons is to educate readers about workforce planning issues and best practices, inform them about upcoming Civil Service workshops and training related to workforce planning and to provide practical job aids to assist agencies with workforce planning.

Comments and submissions: We welcome questions about workforce planning and suggestions for improvements to the newsletter as well as submissions of articles about what your agency is doing in workforce planning. Questions, comments, and requests to be added to the distribution list for the newsletter should be sent to the editor.

Current and Back Issues are accessible under "Workforce Planning Newsletter" in the HR Reference section of the Civil Service web page at www.civilservice.louisiana.gov